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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PROP](#) [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [PTER](#) [IR](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: PRC: U.S. TENSIONS WITH IRAN MAKE SOLVING AMCIT
CASES DIFFICULT

REF: STATE 129480

Classified By: Acting Political Minister Counselor Ben Moeling.
Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) Tensions between the United States and Iran complicate efforts to resolve the cases of six American citizens currently detained in Iran, MFA West Asian Affairs Department Iran Division Deputy Director Ni Ruchi told PolOff December ¶29. PolOff delivered reftel points requesting China to urge the Iranian government to address the cases. Existing tensions with the West, Ni said, including the threat of further sanctions, and continued domestic instabilities in Iran would make it difficult for the United States to secure the timely release of the six Americans. Ni was aware of four out of the six cases (the three hikers and Robert Levinson) and said he would pass on the Embassy's request to his superiors to decide on the "most appropriate" course of action.

Current Turmoil Demonstrates Widespread Dissatisfaction

¶2. (C) The persistence of public unrest in Iran was a sign that the Iranian people were unhappy with the current political regime, Ni commented. He predicted that the current Iranian leadership would only heed domestic calls for reform if it could implement changes without losing power. Ousting President Ahmadinejad might not solve Iran's problems, Ni argued, as he was just a "piece of the puzzle." Real power rested with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who alone had the ability to affect real change. Ni believed current domestic instabilities in Iran would persist for the immediate future and would have an impact on Iran's external relations with other countries.

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